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*The Secret of
Fruitful Service*

Jessie Penn-Lewis.

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The Secret of Fruitful Service

THE word "psychic", as so freely used in the present day, describes one of the most acute dangers of the times—so acute that it is necessary for the children of God to know something about it, and what attitude to take for protection from its effects and also to safeguard them from being drawn into the use of "psychic power" through ignorance of its dangers. In "Spiritism" evil spirits are seen working through mediums, but they must have material in those mediums to enable them to work, and that material is found in the latent powers of the human soul, or *psuche*, which in past years was called animal magnetism. Alas, in many who are not wilfully "mediums" these powers are being developed and used, because they do not know the difference between "soul" and "spirit" as defined in the Word of God, and so they bring into action *psychic power*, thinking it to be *spiritual power*.

First let us consider what is meant by the word "psychic". It describes, in modern language, the "soul" (Greek, *psuche*) life, but it means the soul-life developed, and drawn into activity and power in a way little dreamed of as possible in past ages, except by those who were specially taught the conditions of such development. Let us turn to the Gospel of John,

to see the difference between the soul-life and the spiritual life, according to the Scriptures.

There are two words in the Greek, both of which are translated in the Bible by the English word "life". One is *zoe*, and the other *psuche*, from which we derive the word psychic. The word *zoe* is always used in reference to God, e.g., "the living Father" (John vi. 57), "the city of the living God" (Heb. 12. 22). (See also Heb. 3. 12; 9. 14, and 10. 31). The word "*zoe*" therefore means that kind of life which God has, eternal life.

The Greek word *psuche* is also translated in our English Bible as "life". It is life, but life of a very different kind to the life of God. It is the life of the natural man, the life which God breathed into Adam when He created him (see Gen. 2. 7). "The first man, Adam, was made a *living soul*"—a living *psuche*—"the Second Adam was made a life-giving Spirit" (1 Cor. 15. 45). Conybeare says, in a footnote, that this *psuche* or natural life is the *anima*, or living principle. As we have seen, it is never once used of God, and is not Divine.

But Christ had *psuche*-life, for it is said of Him in John 10. 11, "The Good Shepherd giveth His life (*psuche*) for the sheep". He said "I lay down my life (*psuche*) for the sheep"; and it is also written "He poured out His soul—His *psuche*—unto death". But the *psuche*, or soul, of the Son of God was sinless. It was human, or natural, but without guile, or any element of the fallen Adam in it. Sinless

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Himself, He was "made sin" for us when He "bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2. 24).

Now all who are thus redeemed through the out-poured soul of the Christ of God are "saved in His LIFE" (Gr. *zoe*, Rom. 5. 10). This is not the *psuche*, or soul life, but the very life of Christ the Risen Lord, imparted to us. It is "eternal life", not the life of nature having its origin in the soul. In view of this, therefore, we who are Christ's must needs take a different attitude to the psychic, or soul-life, to that of the world. There is much being said and taught to-day about the development of the soul or personality, but the development of the "*psuche*" is not the standard God has set for the Christian. On the contrary, for the development of the "*zoe*", or life of Christ in us, the *psuche* or psychic life must be reckoned crucified! Let us go over some passages in the Gospel which show this very clearly.

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross . . . For whosoever will save his life (*psuche*, soul) shall lose it . . ." (Matt. 16. 24-26).

Note first that the believer has a choice to make. "If any man WILL to come after Me, let him deny himself." The individual responsibility of the man is shown in the freedom of choice given to him—either to "save his soul-life", or, denying himself, to hand over his *psuche* to be crucified with Christ. Not here the "old man", the "old Adam" of Romans 6. 6, but "himself" in the aspect of the *psuche*, or

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soul. "Develop your soul" is the teaching of the world to-day. "Yield it to the Cross", is the call of the Lamb of Calvary. You may "save your soul" from the Cross, He says, but if you do so, you will "lose it" in eternity, although your *spirit* may be saved (see 1 Cor. 5. 5). This means, briefly, that all that *originates in the psuche* in the believer is really "loss", for only the *zoe* life, the life of God imparted in union with Christ, will abide for ever.

The cause of unfruitful service

How does this concern us? It concerns us most deeply, because numbers of Christians are depending upon natural forces originating in themselves to do the work of God, and that is why there is so much service with so little fruit to it. It is even possible to preach the truth of God in the power of the intellect, and natural ability or eloquence, and with apparent success, but without fruit for eternity. Many are trying to live Christian lives, too, in the power of the natural man, plus a little of the Spirit, i.e., regenerated by the Holy Spirit, but in everything else relying upon the natural virtues of the soul.

"If any man will come after Me," said the Lord, "let him take up his Cross and follow Me", and immediately He goes on to give the meaning of the call, but they are passages little understood. Many think that "taking the Cross" is bearing suffering, or they may even think of it as deliverance from "self", but there is something deeper than this—it

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is the need for an exchanged life. The "soul" itself, i.e., the personality, is not to be destroyed, but the *natural* forces that animate the soul must be taken to the Cross, so that the soul may be energized or animated from the *spirit*, instead of from the fleshly life of the body. The key to revival lies here. There is an ocean of life ready to break forth, but God is hindered, not only by sin, but by the dead block of the natural life in His children, that is in His way. The promise of Christ is, "out of his *inward parts shall flow rivers of living water*". If we will lay down this psychical life, this life of nature, this life that is animated from below, the "*anima*", the life of the soul, at the Cross we shall be open for an inflowing and outflowing of the Holy Spirit Who dwells within our spirit, and there will be revival where we are.

The psychic teaching of to-day says, "Get mastery in your business," "develop your soul, train your natural forces". There are girls in London shops who are taught to develop this psychic power in order to compel customers to buy, and if a girl does not do it she is liable to be dismissed. This thing is around us on every side, and is penetrating even our Conventions. I heard a Convention speaker give an address on the verse "he that winneth souls is wise", and he developed the entire theme as being *made tactful*, a sort of natural wisdom to attract souls. For those who want the supernatural there is not only Spiritism, but there is this psychic development on every hand, and true children of God will have to take a stand

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against it and see to it that they do not come under the power of it, and, under the guise of "prayer", develop the will power and other *natural* forces of the human frame. It is dangerous, and it is penetrating all forms of Christian work. It is a common saying: "Use *your influence* to get so-and-so to do so-and-so". We need to know the Cross in its deepest meaning and application, and to take a stand that *God alone* shall work in us and through us; that we will not exercise anything of our own personality nor our own soul-powers upon others in the slightest degree. Then we shall be channels for a pure stream of the "living waters", and souls will be quickened and brought to God, and their faith will stand in the power of God and not in "the wisdom of man" (1 Cor. 2. 5).

"Self-expression" or "self" denied?

The natural life—the life that embodies this psychic power—is the workshop of the devil, and he is doing his utmost to get it built up and developed. People are calling it "natural science", and "self-expression", but God is calling His Church to take up the Cross and *deny self*. He is calling you, not to develop your "self", not to develop your natural forces, but to lay them down at the Cross, that the life of the "New Creation" (which is Christ in you) may work unhindered.

We know very little about these latent forces resident in every human being, and the one and only barrier that effectually prevents Satan from making

use of them lies in our power of refusal. The principle is the same in respect to God Himself, *i.e.*, God cannot obtain possession of us without our consent, since He gave to Adam the barrier of a free will. He had to consent or refuse to obey God. Therefore God will do everything for us short of forcing our wills. He gave His only begotten Son to die for us on the Cross, where He obtained for us a full redemption—but we must accept it, if it is to be ours. That is why God overlooks so much until He can get the soul to the place of full surrender of the will.

Now Satan desires to draw out the latent forces in fallen humanity for his own ends. A prophetic writer wrote years ago saying that, at the close of the age, there would be a great movement in this direction, preparing the way for Satan's complete control. That is just where we are now. There are unions formed for developing these psychic powers, thought-reading, clairvoyance, clair-audience, impression of thought, and other forms of psychical science—it all means the drawing out of these latent powers in the fallen nature of man. How vital it is that we know the Cross in its experimental power, to cut us off from all these things that are in the world. How important it is that our attitude of will is against these things! "If any man *will* to come after Me"—not, "let him develop himself," but—"let him *deny himself* and take up his Cross, and follow Me; for whosoever will save his soul-life (Gr. *psuche*) shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his soul-life for My sake, shall find it unto life

eternal". Whosoever will "save", or cling to, his soul-life—it will mean for him eternal loss, not of salvation, but of fruit for eternity (see 1 Cor. 3. 15).

The next verse goes on to show the profit and loss account: "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul (*psuche*)?" We may be regenerated in spirit, but the soul has to be saved from being "lost" from service for Christ. Our personality, our "self", has to be saved from a wasted, fruitless life.

Turn now to Luke 12. 16-20, and read the parable of the "rich fool", where we find that the "soul" is the part of our being that is concerned with this laying-up of goods, the pleasures and comforts of this life. "Soul," says this rich man, "thou hast much goods laid up . . . take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry". But God said to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall those things be . . ." The soul-life has much to do with possessions, and with covetousness, and the Lord so often has to strip Christians, and bring them low, to make them really usable. When a believer is in trouble, stripped and broken, then the spiritual power that is in him breaks forth. When the devil sees spiritual power active in a believer, he often comes along with the tempting things of earth, many of which are, of course, perfectly lawful. Then things are easier, there is more money, and less strain—but they may *lose all their spiritual power*! Something has gone out of their ministry, and they do not know

it. It seems so difficult to be in this world, to have its good things, and not to be affected by them. But there is an inward depth of the Cross which, even supposing you were a millionaire, would enable you to live the life "hid with Christ in God" in the midst of it all. It ought not to be necessary for God to strip us, though "a man's life (*zoe*) consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesses" (Luke 12. 15).

"He that loveth his life (*psuche*) shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal (unto *zoe* eternal). If any man serve Me, let him follow Me . . ." (John 12. 25-26).

Here is the exchanged life—he that hates his *psuche* life and lets it go, shall have in exchange that *zoe* life, which is life eternal. It is learning to let the Cross of Christ be applied to every part of the life of nature—not only in the breakdown of the natural virtues, but also in an inward attitude that you "hate" the life that comes from the earth, from the first man Adam, who was made "a living soul". You take the attitude that you hate it, and you really do hate it, when you see it in the light of the eternal; "if any man serve Me, let him follow Me, and where I am, there shall also My servant be". I do urge upon you this taking of the right attitude toward the soul-life, and choosing to have the exchanged life of Christ, so that, instead of developing the "soul" we shall hate it, and lay it down at the Cross.

"The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4. 12).

How shall we know what is "soulish" and what is truly spiritual in our life and service? Only as the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God, and as we come under the criticism of the Word perpetually, daily allowing that Word to examine our actions, to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart, to penetrate to the inward motive. In making a choice, you will know, as you walk under the light of God's Word, whether there is a right motive behind it, and you will not care to draw upon your own power, or to use your personal influence: you will know how to stand back in God, and see Him work. When someone comes to you, and would like you to make a decision for him, you will say, "No, I am not your guide, ask God to guide you". And you will be most careful never to put pressure upon another believer to act under your choice or your decision.

We need to recognize that every human being is directly responsible to God, and to educate believers not to rely upon the judgment of those around them, but to walk with God *themselves*. Let us teach the babes to *stand*, to walk with God, so that we can leave them, and when we are gone out of sight they will stand true to God.

"The Word of God liveth and worketh . . . piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit" (C.H.). Dividing intangible things. Fausset says: "Christ 'knows what is in man' (John 2. 25), so His Word reaches as far as to the most intimate and accurate knowledge of man's most hidden parts, feelings and thoughts, dividing, i.e., *distinguishing* what is *spiritual* from what is carnal and animal in him, the spirit from the soul". Shall it be so? Will you make your choice? You have said your "old man" is crucified with Christ; will you now say "Lord, I lay down at Thy feet my soul-life, that it may be animated by Thy Spirit. I take the Cross, and determine by Thy grace to deny *myself*, my old natural life; I ask that Thy Word may divide between soul and spirit in me".

Shall I tell you what the result will be? When the soul and the spirit are not divided, there is mixture. Sometimes you act from your spirit, sometimes from the soul-life, and that is why some people are so disappointing. You hear a servant of God speak, and he speaks from his source in God. The next time you hear him the source is changed, he speaks from his own natural "soul". When he spoke from the Spirit the people were all alert and keen—there is something extraordinary about the power of God's Spirit poured out through a human spirit. How the people are touched by it! How they respond to it! When the soul and the spirit are divided by the severing power of the Word of God, there is life; but everything that

comes from the soul is dead, however true or beautiful it may be.

When the spirit is divided from the soul, it is brought into what the old Mystics used to call Essential Union with God, for God's Spirit is not joined to "soul", God's Spirit can only be joined to spirit: "*he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit*". "The spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord" (Prov. 20. 27). If God is to work through you in fullest power, it needs that your spirit be joined to Him, *one spirit*, and that cannot be until this dividing takes place, because every time the "soul" acts instead of the spirit, it rises like a smoke, a shadow, over the "candle" and dims its light. When the spirit acts you become a clear lamp—a lamp of the Lord. We need deep, unbroken union with God, joined to the Lord one spirit with Him—the life within the veil. We cannot be united to Christ in soul, it is our spirit that is "in the heavenly places in Christ" (Ephes. 2. 6). The spirit life in union with Christ should shine through the personality of the soul, and penetrate through the entire being in simplicity and power. It is what we *are*—not what we say or do—that is the power, and the whole of it depends upon the extent to which God is able to bring about in us a real severing work of the Cross. All the psychic power that is abroad to-day will not hurt you, if you will let the Cross do its work, for things without cannot touch you except they get some correspondence with things *within you*. The psychic forces outside will not touch

your spirit, but they will touch any of those kindred psychic forces that are in you, which are not under the safeguard of the Cross.

Lastly, this dividing of soul and spirit is necessary for the believer's warfare. "They overcame him by the Blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives (Gr. *psuche*—soul-life) unto the death." They loved not, did not cling to, their soul-life, or they could not have "overcome" Satan. Our Lord on the Cross committed His Spirit to His Father, but He "poured out" his sinless soul "unto death" and "we ought to lay down our lives (our *psuche*) for the brethren" (1 John 3. 16).

We have to face the facts of to-day, and God the Holy Spirit must have channels through which He can work in purity, without mixture. Shall this natural life go to death, that God may come into our spirits and pour out through them in blessing to others? Do you want revival enough for that? Will you cease building up this soul-life, and feeding it? Remember that Satanic supernatural experiences *build up* the soul-life, but whenever there is a true work of the Holy Spirit, it takes the life of nature into death. If God has condemned the flesh to death—if God has said that the old creation was entirely corrupt and only fit to be slain—how can God the Holy Spirit work through a believer who is living or working under the power of the old creation life? Whenever the power of the flesh is at work alongside of supernatural experiences, it is a proof that they cannot safely be

taken as Divine, for if God the Holy Spirit has to put the flesh to death on the Cross when He comes to dwell in a human being (Rom. 8. 8-10) surely the flesh and the life of nature is broken down by His Presence anywhere, and taken to the death of the Cross. May the Lord take this life of nature, in each one of us, and keep it nailed to the Cross of our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

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